Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple, Polali, Mangalore, Karnataka

Info is given under following headings:

Location, address, phone number...etc., how to get there, greatness of this temple, architecture, Main deity here and its size and speciality subdeities, daily poojas and finals and their charges special poojas, sevas and their charges festivals, facilities for devotees such as accommodation etc, donation info, bank acct numbers etc.., nearby Temples, nearby places of tourist interest, nearby budget hotels, any other info… such as a brief section on polali Chendu game, some photos of Sri Rajarajeshwari idol and the Temple, and links to some YouTube videos are also included.

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This ancient abode of the Divine Mother, nestled amid verdant hills and the flowing Phalguni River, radiates unparalleled grace and protection.

Location, Address, Phone Number...etc.

Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple (also known as Shree Kshethra Polali Rajarajeshwari Temple) is situated in the serene village of Polali (Kariyangala), Bantwal Taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka. It lies on the banks of the sacred Phalguni River, enveloped by lush paddy fields and gentle hillocks, about 19-20 km southeast of Mangalore city center.

Full Address: Polali, Bantwal Taluk, Dakshina Kannada District – 574 219, Karnataka, India.

Phone Numbers: +91-824-2266141 (main), +91-824-2266241 (alternative).

Email: info@polalitemple.com.

Official Website: polalitemples.com (for online seva bookings and updates).

Timings: Open daily from 6:00 AM to 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM (extended during festivals).
Darshan is free; no entry fee.
Photography is allowed in outer areas but restricted in the sanctum.
Dress code: Traditional attire (sarees/dhotis; modest clothing).

How to Get There

By Air: Nearest airport is Mangalore International Airport (IXE), 25 km away (30-40 min drive). Taxis/autos available for ₹500-700.

By Train: Mangalore Central (MAQ) or Mangalore Junction (MAJN), 19 km away. Hire a cab (₹400-600, 25-30 min) or auto-rickshaw (₹300).

By Bus: Frequent KSRTC/private buses from Mangalore's State Bank Bus Stand to B.C. Road via Polali (every 15-30 min, ₹30-50, 45 min journey). Alight at Polali stop (1 km walk to temple) or Kaikamba (then auto ₹50).

By Car: From Mangalore, take NH73 towards Bantwal; well-signposted route via Kulshekar and Vittal (19 km, 30-40 min). Ample parking at temple (free). GPS: "Polali Rajarajeshwari Temple" leads directly. Best visited early morning to avoid crowds.

Greatness of This Temple

This revered Shakti Peetha traces its origins to the 8th century AD, built by the legendary King Suratha of the Alupa dynasty, who installed the sacred clay idol after divine inspiration from Sage Sumedha.

Alluded to in ancient Ashokan inscriptions, foreign traveler accounts, and the Markandeya Purana (dating back potentially 5,000 years), it symbolizes the triumph of dharma over adharma, embodying Goddess Rajarajeshwari as the full incarnation of Bhuvaneshwari—protector of the worlds, vanquisher of demons like Bhandasura, and bestower of boons for health, prosperity, and spiritual liberation.

Legends recount how the idol's clay, sourced from the Phalguni River, possesses miraculous healing properties, curing ailments through mere touch or prasadam.

Enriched by dynasties like Chalukya, Hoysala, Vijayanagara, and Keladi (Queen Chennammaji donated the grand chariot), it stands as a beacon of unity, drawing millions for its unique Polali Chendu festival—a ritualistic "football" battle symbolizing good over evil.

As a pilgrimage hub amid natural splendor, it fosters devotion per Durgama and Skandagama texts, granting wishes to pure-hearted seekers and safeguarding against life's tempests.

Architecture

The temple exemplifies a harmonious blend of Kerala (Nagara) and Dravidian styles, with coastal influences—characterized by towering gopurams, intricate wooden carvings of deities, mythical motifs, and copper-plated roofs that gleam under the sun.

The sanctum (garbhagriha) houses the main idol on a raised platform, surrounded by subsidiary shrines in a rectangular courtyard. Ornate pillars depict scenes from the Devi Mahatmya, while the vimana (tower) features stucco reliefs of ashtadikpalakas (guardians).

The massive wooden chariot (ratha), donated in the 17th century, is a highlight, pulled during festivals. Built initially from molten brass with four platforms, it reflects resilience through renovations by successive rulers, blending serenity with grandeur amid the riverine landscape.

Main Deity Here and Its Size and Speciality Subdeities

Main Deity:
Shri Rajarajeshwari (a fierce yet benevolent form of Adi Shakti, akin to Tripura Sundari), depicted in a majestic sitting (lalitasana) posture with eight arms holding weapons like bow, arrow, trident, and lotus—symbolizing cosmic power and grace.

The idol is a rare 9-10 foot tall stucco/clay murti (moulded entirely from Phalguni River clay with medicinal herbs), adorned with a gem-encrusted crown (once bearing King Suratha's own crown), silk sarees, and floral garlands.

Its speciality lies in the self-manifested (svayambhu) clay, believed to cure chronic illnesses, infertility, and evil influences when vibhuti (sacred ash) is applied—devotees report healings from leprosy and mental afflictions.

Subdeities (Parsvas): Flanking the main sanctum are idols of Lord Mahaganapati (remover of obstacles, elephant-headed, 4-5 ft), Lord Subrahmanya (warrior deity on peacock), Goddess Bhadrakali (fierce protector), and Goddess Saraswati (bestower of knowledge)—all in clay, invoking comprehensive divine protection. Smaller shrines include those for Navagrahas and Ashtadikpalakas.

Daily Poojas and Rituals and Their Charges; Special Poojas, Sevas and Their Charges

Poojas follow the Durgagama and Skandagama traditions, emphasizing floral offerings (no animal sacrifices).

Daily Rituals: Suprabhata Seva (dawn awakening) at 6:00 AM; Balabhoga (mid-morning naivedya) at 9:00 AM;

Maha Pooja (grand abhishekam with milk, honey, and chants) at 12:00 PM;
Sayarakshana (evening protection ritual) at 7:00 PM; and

Shejarti (night lullaby) at 8:00 PM. Free annadanam (midday meals) for all devotees

Daily/Special Poojas & Sevas (charges in INR; bookable online via official website or at counter; timings vary, typically slotted during darshan hours):

Hoovina Pooja (floral worship): ₹100
Kumkumarchane (vermilion anointing): ₹50
Pancha Kajjaya (five delicacies offering): ₹20
Gayathri Pooja: ₹120
Karthi Pooje (lamp ritual): ₹20
Sathyanarayana Pooja: ₹100
Lalitha Sahasranama (1000 names chant): ₹100
Ganesha/Subramanya/Kaali Sahasranama: ₹100 each
Soundarya Lahari (hymn recitation): ₹100
Durga Namaskara/Khadga Maalarchana: ₹120 each
Astothara/Trishathi/Bala Vimshathi Archane: ₹50 each

Devi Mahatme Parayana: ₹50
Yanthra Shuddi/Bhandhana (yantra purification/binding): ₹10 each
Saree Offering: ₹30
Sarvalankara Pooja (full adornment): ₹600
Karpurarathi (camphor aarti): ₹10
Tripura Sundari/Navaavarana/Khadga Maala (Sumputitha): ₹200/₹150/₹150
Maha Pooja: ₹200
Sarva Seve (complete service): ₹1200
Laddu Prasada: ₹30
Hoo Prashne (divination): ₹30
Kalasa Snana (holy bath): ₹30
Anna Pasana (food offering): ₹100
Aksharabyasa (alphabet initiation for children): ₹600
Vehicle Sevas: Two-wheeler ₹20; Three-wheeler ₹50; Light vehicle ₹100; Heavy vehicle ₹200.

Special poojas like Sahasranamas are during Kartika month; advance booking recommended for festivals.

Festivals

The temple pulses with devotion during vibrant utsavas, blending ritual and community joy.

Key celebrations:

Polali Chendu Mela (April/May, 5-30 days): Unique month-long festival commemorating Devi's victory over demons Chand-Munda; features ritual football matches between village teams (symbolizing dharma's triumph), yakshagana dances, and chariot processions—draws lakhs, with the ball "blessed" by the Goddess.

Brahma Rathotsava (Annual Car Festival) (March, e.g., March 15, 2025): Grand ratha yatra with the ornate chariot pulled by devotees, followed by deepotsava (lamp festival).

Navaratri (Sept-Oct): Nine nights of Devi stotras, kumkumarchane, and alankaras.

Kartika Pooja (Oct-Nov): Special floral and lamp rituals.

Other: Dasara, Diwali with fireworks; Punya Tithi of past benefactors. All include free feasts and cultural programs.

Facilities for Devotees Such as Accommodation etc.

The temple offers devotee-centric amenities in its expansive 10-acre complex:

Accommodation: 50+ clean, basic rooms/dorms (single/double/triple) on-site, with attached baths, solar hot water, and fans (₹200-500/night; family-friendly). Book via official portal polalitemple.in or phone; priority during festivals.

Adjacent Ramakrishna Tapovan provides meditation retreats and budget stays (₹300-800).

Other Facilities: Free annadanam hall (serves 1,000+ daily); parking for 200+ vehicles; clean restrooms; medical aid during events; wheelchairs for elderly; souvenir shops for prasadam/laddus; Wi-Fi in common areas. Riverside ghats for ritual dips; eco-friendly waste management.

Donation Info, Bank Acct Numbers etc..

Donations sustain poojas, renovations, and annadanam—online via website (UPI/GPay/Netbanking) or cash/cheque at counter. Tax-exempt under 80G.

Bank Details (for direct transfers; payable to "Shree Kshethra Rajarajeshwari Temple, Polali"):

Account Number: 70930100001794
Bank Name: Canara Bank (Polali Branch)
IFSC Code: CNRB0001605
Branch: Polali, Bantwal.
Contact office for receipts/queries. Special campaigns (e.g., chariot maintenance) announced on website.

Nearby Temples

- Dharmasthala Manjunatha Temple (50 km north, 1 hr): Famous for Lord Shiva and social welfare.
- Kukke Subramanya Temple (60 km east, 1.5 hr): Serpent deity for nagadosha remedies.
- Kateel Durga Parameshwari Temple (25 km northwest, 45 min): Riverine Shakti shrine amid lush groves.
- Kudroli Gokarnath Temple (20 km to Mangalore, 30 min): Ganapati shrine with Gomateshwara statue.
- Ujire Annapoorneshwari Temple (40 km, 1 hr): Dedicated to the goddess of nourishment.

Nearby Places of Tourist Interest

- Phalguni River Banks (on-site): Scenic spots for picnics and boating (2 km stretch).
- Pilikula Nisargadhama (15 km, 30 min): Zoo, botanical garden, and science center.
- Moodbidri Jaina Basadi (30 km, 45 min): Ancient Jain temples with monolithic pillars.
- Tannirbhavi Beach (25 km to Mangalore, 40 min): Pristine sands and lighthouse views.
- Kadri Park & Manjunatha Temple (20 km, 30 min): Hilltop gardens with caves and waterfalls.

Nearby Budget Hotels

Affordable stays within 5-20 km (prices per night, double room; book via MakeMyTrip/Goibibo for deals starting ₹800-1,500):

Green Retreat Second Home (3 km, Bantwal): Cozy homestay with veg meals, ₹1,000-1,200.
Hotel Ganga Sagar (15 km, Bajpe): Clean AC rooms near airport, ₹991-1,500.

Adyar Plaza Inn (18 km, Mangalore): Budget chain with breakfast, ₹1,200-1,800

Esha Homestay (20 km): Family-run, river views, ₹800-1,200.

Treebo Sky City Grand (near airport, 22 km): Modern budget, ₹1,000-1,400.6dcba8 Most offer veg food and temple transport.

Any Other Info

The temple's unbroken agamic worship, led by hereditary priests, includes rare tantric rituals like Yantra Homa during eclipses. It's eco-conscious, promoting river conservation.

Recent highlights: 2025 Brahmotsava drew 5 lakh devotees; live darshan via temple Facebook (@SriPolali).
For weddings/rituals, contact for kalyana mantapa (₹5,000-10,000 rental).
Legends whisper of the idol "sweating" during crises, signaling divine intervention.

A must-visit for Shakti upasakas—may Amma's grace envelop you!

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Polali Chendu Festival: A Divine Symphony of Faith and Valor

The Polali Chendu festival is the pulsating heart of the Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple's annual celebrations, a unique ritual where the ancient sport of "Chendu" (a sacred football game) becomes a metaphor for the eternal battle of dharma over adharma. Below, we have a detailed overview based on authentic sources, including the temple's traditions and the recent 2025 events.
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Overview

The Polali Chendu (or Kade Chendu) is the crowning highlight of the temple's month-long annual Brahmotsava, blending spirituality, community fervor, and physical prowess. Held on the banks of the Phalguni River, it features a ritualistic football match using a handcrafted leather ball, symbolizing Goddess Rajarajeshwari's triumph over demons like Bhandasura. Unlike modern sports, it's a non-competitive, devotional "war" where victory honors the Divine Mother, drawing lakhs of devotees from Karnataka, Kerala, and beyond. The festival fosters unity, with participants from local villages donning traditional attire and playing barefoot under the watchful gaze of Amma.

History and Legends

Tracing back over 1,200 years to the 8th century AD, the festival originates from the temple's founding by King Suratha of the Alupa dynasty. Exiled and betrayed, the king performed penance under Sage Sumedha in the Polali forests, where he molded the clay idol of Rajarajeshwari from Phalguni River mud mixed with sacred herbs. Legends in the Markandeya Purana describe the Chendu as a reenactment of the Devi Mahatmya's battles, where the leather ball represents the demon's severed head—kicked across fields to signify good's conquest. The Alupas formalized it around 710-720 AD, with subsequent dynasties (Chalukya, Hoysala, Vijayanagara, Keladi) enhancing it; Queen Chennammaji gifted the temple's iconic chariot in the 17th century for the post-Chendu procession. Tipu Sultan, an admirer, built a viewing platform (Sultan Katte) in the 18th century. Ancient Ashokan inscriptions and traveler accounts (e.g., Ibn Battuta) allude to similar riverine rituals, underscoring its antiquity—potentially linked to 5,000-year-old Shakti worship.

Rituals and How It's Played

The Chendu is steeped in tantric and agamic rites from the Durgagama and Skandagama texts, commencing with invocations to invoke Amma's blessings for protection and prosperity.

Preparation Rituals: A specialized cobbler family from Mijar crafts the leather ball (chendu) from cowhide, stuffed with herbs for medicinal potency—believed to cure ailments when touched. An oil miller family from Kadapu Karia announces the start by placing the ball in the temple's frontyard (Malali Ballal) amid Vedic chants. On the eve, priests perform a special abhishekam to the main idol, followed by the ball's consecration under a palm-leaf umbrella on the gopuram.

The Game (Kade Chendu): Played over 5 intense days (7 days before the Avabritha Snana, the festival's purifying bath), it involves two village teams (up to 500 players each, any age/gender, barefoot) on a vast riverside field. Rules are simple yet symbolic: No hands—only feet, head, or body to propel the ball across the opponent's "goal" (a marked line 100-200 meters away). Fouls are minimal; the focus is endurance and devotion, not scoring. The ball, oiled and heavy, is "blessed" daily with kumkum and mantras. Matches end with the winning team offering the ball at Amma's feet, followed by communal feasts (anna prasadam) and yakshagana performances depicting Devi's victories.

Culmination: On the final day, the "victorious" ball is immersed in the Phalguni during Avabritha, transitioning to the Brahma Rathotsava (chariot procession) the next day, where the idol rides the grand ratha pulled by thousands.
No animal sacrifices; all rituals emphasize floral offerings, Sahasranama chanting, and eco-harmony with the river.

Dates and Schedule (2025)

The 2025 Brahmotsava spanned March 15 to April 10, aligning with the Uttarayana (auspicious solar transit).

Chendu Commencement: March 31–April 4 (5 days of matches).

Grand Culmination (Kade Chendu Finale): April 9, with village teams clashing in high spirits amid bhajans and fireworks.

Avabritha Snana: April 9 evening (ball immersion).
Rathotsava: April 10 (chariot pull, deepotsava with lakhs of lamps).

Daily poojas intensified: Suprabhata at dawn, Maha Pooja at noon, and Sayarakshana at dusk. The 2025 edition saw vibrant participation, with devotees from afar joining the barefoot frenzy, marking a seamless blend of tradition and joy despite minor rains.

Significance

Beyond spectacle, Chendu embodies Rajarajeshwari's role as Bhuvaneshwari—the cosmic protector—teaching resilience, equality (caste/wealth irrelevant), and surrender to the Divine. It's a living purana: The ball's journey mirrors life's struggles, its immersion signifies ego-dissolution, and the chariot victory affirms faith's ultimate win. For locals, it's a social equalizer; for pilgrims, a wish-fulfiller (health, progeny, prosperity). The festival reinforces Tulu Nadu's cultural tapestry, promoting river conservation and women's empowerment through Shakti bhakti. As per temple lore, sincere participants receive Amma's "kick" of blessings—curing chronic ills via vibhuti prasadam.

Facilities and Tips for Attendees

Accommodation: Temple dorms (₹200-500/night) fill fast; book via polalitemples.com. Nearby: Green Retreat Homestay (3 km).

Access: B.C. Road bus stop (1 km walk); ample parking. Expect crowds—arrive early for ringside views.

Highlights to Witness: The ball's anointing, midnight aarti post-match, and post-festival mela with handicrafts. Live streams on temple's Facebook (@SriPolaliRajRajeshwari).

This ritualistic revelry is Amma's call to play the game of life with devotion!

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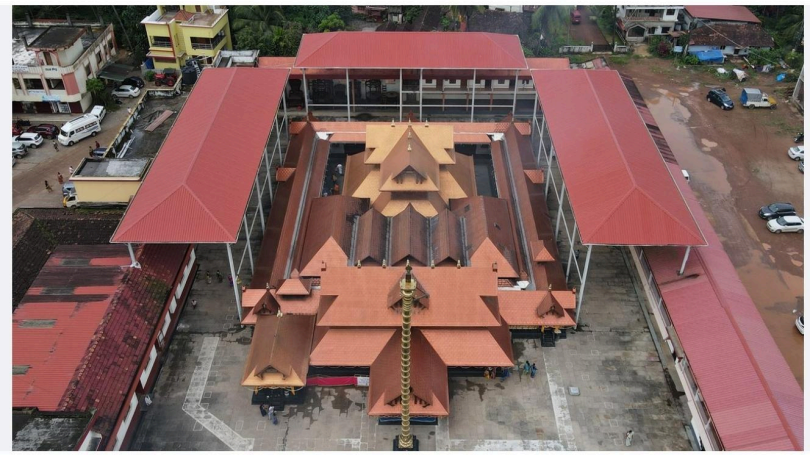
Photos

Sri Rajarajeshwari

Sri Rajarajeshwari

Some images of Temple:



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YouTube Videos

History of Polali Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple - in English(22 min):

https://youtu.be/77u6dbUBD0o?si=KaiH5fWeDNjt-eFS

Polali Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple (4 min):

https://youtu.be/r45a5AtEfLw?si=MGWNC73D_5QAcOcB

Sri kshetra Polali Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple (6 min):

https://youtu.be/1bz3s86rvRQ?si=ZsU_4MTTF-uMfVgM

Sri Rajarajeshwari Temple, Polali- Facebook (4 min):

https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BaPPpkf7j/

Annual Car Festival 2025 - Dhwajarohana (1 min):

https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1ABz5FNbV9/

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Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar
December 5, 2025

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